

The background of the image shows several clear plastic meal prep containers filled with fresh vegetables. One container holds green beans, another has cherry tomatoes, a third contains green bell peppers and a carrot, and a fourth is filled with sliced orange squash. In the foreground, there are more containers with leafy greens like arugula and spinach.

HOW TO

# MEAL PREP

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ON A BUDGET



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# WHY IS MEAL PREPPING IMPORTANT?

Students are busy.

Busy commuter students, especially, are always on the go and may not have time to prepare meals regularly. This can lead to a tendency of skipping meals or choosing quick foods that leave you feeling unsatisfied or unhealthy.

By preparing meals ahead of time, you can ensure that you have a wholesome and nutritious meal ready for you at any time and anywhere



## SIMPLE RECIPES ON A SMALL BUDGET

This blog is designed to help you get started with simple recipes for a low cost with minimal effort.

All the recipes listed can be prepared from a list of  
15 ingredients –  
Each recipe 6 ingredients or less

Pick and choose which you like, but if you decide to make all four recipes, it is designed to provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner for 6 days!

## BEFORE WE BEGIN...

### Let's start with some simple storage tips!

After cooking, refrigerate hot food within 1-2 hours of preparation. This helps protect from food spoilage!

Store leftovers in airtight containers. Plastic or glass containers with lids are preferable, but if not, a Ziploc bag will work as well.

For freezer storage, if not wrapped properly, it could cause “freezer burn” which causes food to dry out. If this happens, just scrape off the burned portion, the rest is still safe to eat!

Leftovers are safe in the refrigeration for **3-5 days**.

Leftovers can be stored in the freezer for up to **3 months**.

[USDA Food Storage Chart:](https://www.fda.gov/media/74435/download)

<https://www.fda.gov/media/74435/download>



# 1 SHOPPING LIST

=

# 24 Meals!

TOTAL ~\$27.26

PRICE:

PRICE PER MEAL: ~\$1.13

*\*\* AFTER PREPARING THESE MEALS, YOU SHOULD ALSO HAVE LEFTOVER SHELF-STABLE INGREDIENTS (HONEY, OIL, RICE) FOR FUTURE USE.*



## SHOPPING LIST

3 lb. bag frozen chicken breasts

Half dozen eggs

3 - 15.25 oz cans black beans  
(or beans of choice)

15.5 oz can chickpeas

2- 14.5 oz cans diced tomatoes

20 oz bag frozen bell pepper & onion  
blend

20 oz bag frozen stir fry veggies

32 oz carton vegetable broth

8 oz bag shredded Monterey jack cheese  
(or cheese of choice)

2 lb. bag rice of choice

12 oz bottle honey (only need 3 tbsp of  
this)

1 packet chili seasoning

48 fl. oz. vegetable oil (or cooking oil of  
choice)

*\*\* All pricing based on  
purchasing from Walmart*



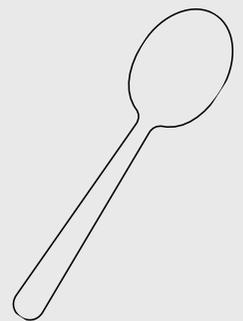
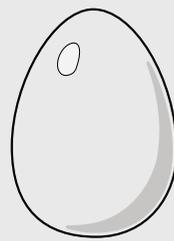
# EVERY RECIPE WILL INCLUDE A LIST OF TOOLS/EQUIPMENT NEEDED.

**Most recipes will require measuring cups/spoons.  
If you don't have these, try some of these tips for simple substitutions:**

*1 tablespoon (tbsp) = 1 large dinner/ eating spoon  
or the size of your thumb*

*¼ cup = size of a large egg*

*1 cup = 1 standard coffee mug  
or the size of your fist*



**WORST (OR BEST) CASE SCENARIO:  
JUST GUESS!**

These recipes are designed to be foolproof and easily adapted.

Feel free to fit the amount of ingredients to what feels right to you!

# Let's begin with breakfast!

## Frittata Bites

### *TOOLS NEEDED*

Muffin Pan

Small Bowl

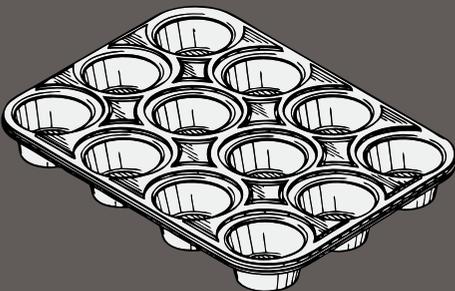
Measuring Cup

Fork

Oven

*Note: if you don't have a muffin pan,  
you can use any small oven safe pan.*

*\*\* See measuring cup  
substitutions above*



### INGREDIENTS

Six Eggs. (\$0.74)

1 cup Bell Pepper

& Onion (\$0.33)

2/3 cup Shredded

Cheese (\$0.55)

*TOTAL PRICE: \$1.62*

*PRICE PER SERVING: \$0.27*

**Tip:** Get creative by changing  
up the ingredients to keep  
breakfast interesting!

# Frittata Bites

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 F
- 2) Use oil or butter to grease a 6-piece muffin pan (if no muffin pan, use small pan)
- 3) Whisk eggs together, salt & pepper to taste
- 4) Distribute veggies & cheese evenly between muffin cups (or in pan)
- 5) Pour egg mixture over veggies & bake for 20 minutes

Note: if using a small pan, slice the egg bake into six pieces after cooling



Add desired ingredients to greased muffin pan



Pour egg over cheese & veggies



Bake for 20 minutes at 350 F



Let cool & serve or store for later

Frittata Bites		
Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size: 1 Serving		
Amount Per Serving		% Daily Value*
<b>Calories</b>	127.4 kcal	6 %
<b>Total Fat</b>	9.2 g	14 %
Saturated Fat	3.9 g	20 %
Trans Fat	0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b>	176.6 mg	59 %
<b>Sodium</b>	140.6 mg	6 %
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	1.8 g	1 %
Dietary Fiber	0.2 g	1 %
Sugars	0.6 g	
<b>Protein</b>	8.6 g	17 %
<b>Vitamin A</b>	13 %	<b>Vitamin C</b> 17 %
<b>Calcium</b>	13 %	<b>Iron</b> 3 %

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Full Info at [cronometer.com](http://cronometer.com) </>

# LUNCH & DINNER RECIPES

Vegan Chili

Southwest Chicken & Rice  
Casserole

Asian Stir Fry



These recipes are diverse and easily  
adaptable to fit any appetite!

Recipes utilize shelf-stable ingredients such  
as canned & frozen goods for  
long-term storage.

# Vegan Chili

## TOOLS NEEDED

Medium/Large Pot

Measuring Cup

Can Opener

Stovetop



Vegan Chili		
Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size: 1 Serving		
Amount Per Serving		% Daily Value*
<b>Calories</b>	257.7 kcal	13 %
<b>Total Fat</b>	2.1 g	3 %
Saturated Fat	0.2 g	1 %
Trans Fat	0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b>	0 mg	0 %
<b>Sodium</b>	904 mg	38 %
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	47.1 g	16 %
Dietary Fiber	16.4 g	65 %
Sugars	6.4 g	
<b>Protein</b>	13.2 g	26 %
Vitamin A	8 %	Vitamin C 22 %
Calcium	10 %	Iron 17 %

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Full Info at [cronometer.com](http://cronometer.com) </>

## INGREDIENTS

15.5 oz can Chickpeas (\$0.72)

2-15.25 oz can black beans/beans of choice (\$1.44)

2-14.5 oz can diced tomatoes (\$1.48)

\*\*buy one 28 oz can for this recipe to save \$0.24

2 cups frozen bell pepper & onion blend (\$0.66)

1 cup vegetable broth (\$0.30)

Great Value Chili seasoning packet of choice (\$0.50)

TOTAL PRICE:

\$5.10

PRICE PER SERVING:

\$0.85



# INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Add onion and bell pepper blend to a large pot over medium heat on the stovetop and cook until softened (1-2 minutes)
- 2) Add remaining ingredients to pot and stir until well mixed  
Option: to add sweetness, add corn
- 3) Bring to a boil and then simmer on low heat for 30 minutes
- 4) Add salt & pepper until you reach desired flavor  
Option: to add spice, sprinkle red pepper flakes lightly until reached desired heat level
- 5) Garnish with desired toppings (i.e. sour cream, cheese, etc.), serve & enjoy!



Soften frozen peppers & onion



Add remaining ingredients to pot



Mix well & cook for 30 minutes



# THE NEXT TWO RECIPES CALL FOR CHICKEN...



## **TIP: ❌ USING FROZEN CHICKEN SAVES MONEY & EXTENDS SHELF LIFE**

If using frozen chicken, it will need to be thawed before cooking.

Below are safe methods of thawing meat



## THAWING METHODS

If you have more time:  
leave in refrigerator  
overnight

OR

Put frozen chicken in  
bag and place bag in  
cold water

If short on time:  
use defrost function on  
microwave and follow  
instructions given

# Southwest Chicken & Rice Casserole

## TOOLS NEEDED

Oven-safe baking pan/dish

Skillet or Frying pan

Knife

Measuring cup

\*\* See measuring cup substitutions

Total Price: \$5.59

## INGREDIENTS

1.5 lb chicken (6 frozen 4 oz breasts) (\$3.13)

1 can black beans (\$0.72)

1 cup vegetable broth (\$0.30)

1 cup bell pepper & onion blend (\$0.33)

1 cup shredded cheese (\$0.83)

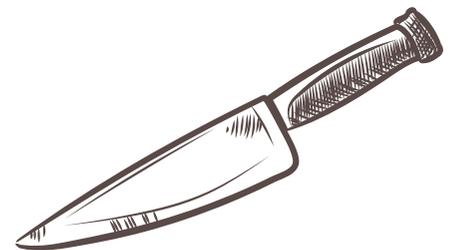
1 cup uncooked rice (\$0.28)

*Optional:* add frozen/canned corn

Price Per Serving: \$0.93

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 F
- 2) Slice thawed chicken into cubes or thin strips.
- 3) On the stovetop add 2 tbsp vegetable oil to skillet on medium heat. Add chicken to skillet and cook until browned.
- 4) Add thawed peppers, diced tomato, black beans and browned chicken into baking dish/pan. Salt & pepper to taste.
- 5) Top with cheese and bake for 45 minutes.





Brown chicken in skillet



Add ingredients to baking dish and stir



Top with cheese



Bake for 40 minutes & store or enjoy!

Southwest Chicken & Rice Casserole		
Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size: 1 Serving		
Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value*	
<b>Calories</b>	444 kcal	22 %
<b>Total Fat</b>	11.6 g	18 %
Saturated Fat	5.6 g	28 %
Trans Fat	0.1 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b>	116.4 mg	39 %
<b>Sodium</b>	429.6 mg	18 %
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	37.9 g	13 %
Dietary Fiber	6 g	24 %
Sugars	0.7 g	
<b>Protein</b>	45.5 g	91 %
<b>Vitamin A</b>	10 %	<b>Vitamin C</b> 18 %
<b>Calcium</b>	15 %	<b>Iron</b> 19 %

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Full Info at [cronometer.com](http://cronometer.com) </>

# Asian Stir Fry

## TOOLS NEEDED

**Skillet/Frying pan**

**Small Pot**

**Measuring cups**

**\*\*See measuring cup substitutions**

## INGREDIENTS

*1.5 lb. chicken (6 frozen breasts) (\$3.13)*

*1 bag stir fry vegetables of choice (\$2.33)*

*1 c vegetable broth (\$0.30)*

*3 tbsp honey (\$0.63)*

*Option: add pepper flakes for added spice*

*On the side:*

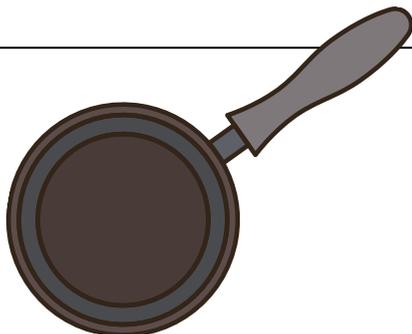
*1 c uncooked rice (\$0.28) - To make 3 cups*

Total Price:

**\$6.64**

Price Per Serving:

**\$1.10**



SEE FOLLOWING  
PAGES FOR TIPS ON  
SIMPLE RICE  
PREPARATION

Asian Stir Fry		
Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size: 1 Serving		
Amount Per Serving		% Daily Value*
Calories	255.6 kcal	13 %
<b>Total Fat</b>	5.1 g	8 %
Saturated Fat	1.5 g	7 %
Trans Fat	0.1 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b>	96.4 mg	32 %
<b>Sodium</b>	211.3 mg	9 %
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	14.9 g	5 %
Dietary Fiber	1.7 g	7 %
Sugars	10.6 g	
<b>Protein</b>	36.8 g	74 %
Vitamin A	3 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium	4 %	Iron 9 %
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.		
Full Info at <a href="http://cronometer.com">cronometer.com</a>		</>

# INSTRUCTIONS

1) Let chicken thaw (see thawing methods) and slice into strips or 1" chunks

2) Whisk together chicken broth, honey and chili flakes/siracha (if using) in a bowl

3) Heat 2 tbsp vegetable oil in a pan over medium heat, add chicken to pan

4) Cook chicken until cooked through (3-5 minutes), salt & pepper to taste. Remove from skillet.

5) Add veggie bag and broth/honey mixture & cook until vegetables are tender (5-7 minutes)

6) Add chicken back to skillet and cook for 1 more minute, serve over rice



## Ingredients



Cook the chicken



Saute the veggies



Add chicken back to pan

# Simple Steamed Rice

## INGREDIENTS

1 cup uncooked rice  
2 cups water

White Rice, Steamed		
<b>Nutrition Facts</b>		
Serving Size: 1 cup — 158g		
Amount Per Serving		% Daily Value*
<b>Calories</b>	205.4 kcal	10 %
<b>Total Fat</b>	0.4 g	1 %
Saturated Fat	0.1 g	1 %
Trans Fat	0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b>	0 mg	0 %
<b>Sodium</b>	1.6 mg	0 %
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	44.5 g	15 %
Dietary Fiber	0.5 g	2 %
Sugars	0 g	
<b>Protein</b>	4.3 g	9 %
Vitamin A	0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium	2 %	Iron 11 %
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.		

## White v. Brown Rice

Brown Rice, Steamed		
<b>Nutrition Facts</b>		
Serving Size: 1 cup — 202g		
Amount Per Serving		% Daily Value*
<b>Calories</b>	248.5 kcal	12 %
<b>Total Fat</b>	2 g	3 %
Saturated Fat	0.5 g	3 %
Trans Fat	0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b>	0 mg	0 %
<b>Sodium</b>	8.1 mg	0 %
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	51.7 g	17 %
Dietary Fiber	3.2 g	13 %
Sugars	0.5 g	
<b>Protein</b>	5.5 g	11 %
Vitamin A	0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium	1 %	Iron 6 %
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.		

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Add rice and water to a small pot
- 2) Bring to a boil
- 3) Reduce heat to low and cover pot with a lid
- 4) simmer for 15 minutes



Add rice  
& water  
to pot

Bring to a  
boil, then  
simmer for  
15 minutes



Stir & serve

# References

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